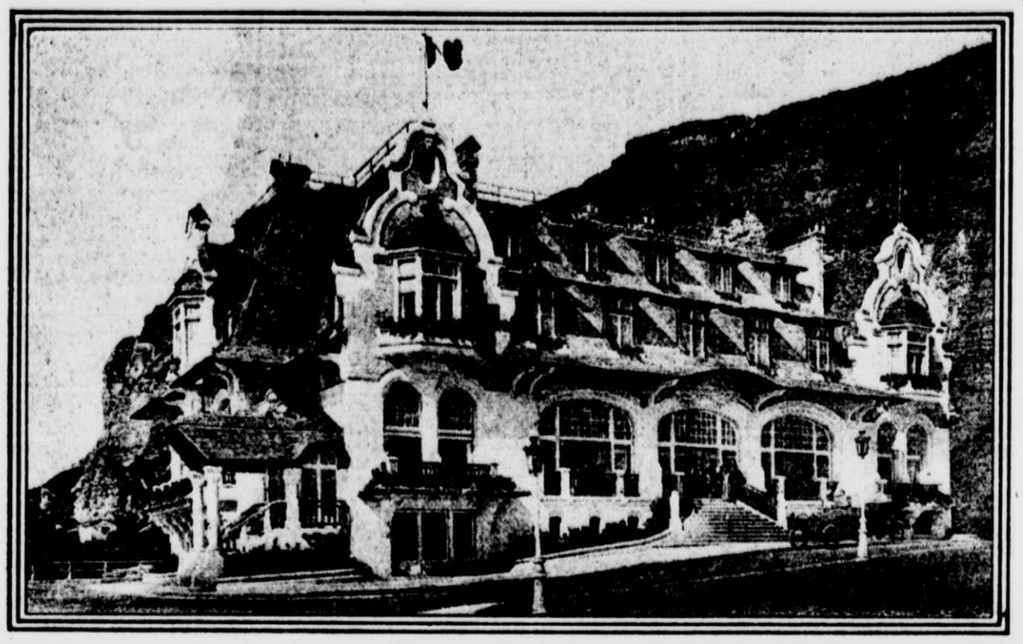
CARING FOR WOUNDED SOLDIERS AT HAVRE

No Expense or Trouble Is Considered in Treating Those Returned From the Front---Soldiers Fear Cold of Trenches



Home of Belgian Ministry at Havre.

HAVRE shows war sights which London does not. The contrast is quickly manifest on a trip from London. The train from Waterloo station reaches the boat at Southampton at midnight and the passengers must before embarking show passports properly vised by the French consulate and permitting the bearers to enter France. There are no tourists; every one who crosses the Channel now has some urgent reason. On one trip a correspondent of THE SUN saw representatives of many British regiments —Grenadiers, Coldstreams, Scots Greys, artillery and a fair complement of Red Cross attendants and nurses.

The deck space usually devoted to boxes or trunks is filled with motor ambulances, Red Cross supplies and army equipment. From a leeward corner bits of military talk break into your reflections:

"My dear chap, what a question! What regiment am I goin' with? As if one ever knew. There's only one thing you do know, you know, and that is that you won't jolly well be sent with your own regiment."

"That's the trouble with pampering the lower clawsses, you know. My footman's had central heating in his room, you know, and can't snug into a trench."

"Asked to be sent home invalided because he had adenoids. Adenoids! Of course he had 'em when he was a child. You have to have 'em when you're a child if you have 'em at all. Sent him back, though. Weed 'em out, I say. Adenoids, huh!"

And so on.

Havre is remembered, probably unpleasantly, by thousands of American tourists who swarmed there in the early part of September to take La Touraine and to meet the warship Tennessee, and the hotel proprietors have still reflective smiles which recall that happy time when fabulous prices were paid for rooms and premiums were offered for beds or straw on the end of a quay.

After that Havre became a base of operations, was evacuated by the military and the wounded, and now is again a centre of army and Red Cross work. But for how long one cannot tell. "We may have to get out to-morrow if the Germans get too near," you are told, "for in this war the base of operations one day is a dead city the next."

After London's streets, where life pursues its daily round unchanged to any great extent, Havre seems to be in a ferment of energy. Every street is alive with troops, coming and going to the stations, waiting orders and filling in the time with promenades. Files of gray gun carriages, each drawn by a team of heavy percherons, pass the windows of our hotel on the Rue de Paris.

Through the panorama of gay colors and subdued khaki, like a long black ribbon, a funeral procession now and then unrolls its narrow length, the hearse covered with mauve bead wreaths, the carriages filled with military uniforms and weeping women.

Glengarry bonnets, Belgian caps, French kepis are touched one to the other as troops crisscross in the market place, before the Hotel de Ville, with its flower filled garden, or at some corner crowded with sightseers, never weary of the moving picture daily displayed.

English mothers, wives and sisters have come across the Channel to meet the men who are invalided here, who are to go to the front or who have just returned and are on waiting orders. Paris, too, has sent its contingent, and every night at the table d'hote one sees pretty, anxious, fussy and adoring women, too proud or anxious to eat, watching their companions with unconcealed pride. War correspondents and photographers, Red Cross helpers who are finding themselves with food and lodging and the trailers who have come, one neither knows why nor cares, make up a busy scene which has its particular features of interest every minute.

One does not get very far these days without the letter of introduction which breaks down not only the usual barrier of British reserve but that of the suspicion under which all foreigners naturally rest. One particular letter carried to Havre is an open sesame to the companionship of Lady Lethbridge, who has been on the roster of the Ostend nursing corps, has returned to London since the German occupation of that city and has come back with supplies for the Belgian hospital at Calais.

With her a visit is made first of all to a big warehouse where the twenty packages that contain warm clothing, medical supplies and convalescent luxuries are carefully counted.

"That will keep them a little while," she announces as she ticks them off painstakingly; "but, oh, we do need more! These were sent from the Empress Club in Dover street."

From the warehouse we drive to the Maritime Hospital, which is one of the most interesting sights of the present base. A few weeks ago it was a dusty, grimy railroad station where hundreds of trains every day brought and took away their passengers. It is in charge of the British Red Cross and the work of conversion was done by that organization in conjunction with the municipal authorities.

All partitions were taken down, plenty of white paint, soap and water were applied, and in the outer ward, where hundreds of cots are placed in parallel rows in the operating theatre, once a waiting room, in other rooms transformed into smaller wards, the same meticulous cleanliness and the same systematic care are seen. Several maritime frescoes, some maps and placards announcing the arrival and departure of trains still remain, little touches of a past use.

At one end a partition separates the self-contained apartment where the nurses have their quarters and where they are made as comfortable as can be, for on them depend the recuperation of the wounded.

Each of the cots is covered with an army blanket and a second one is rolled along the edge furthest from the door. This is done so that when the wounded soldier is brought in on the stretcher he can be moved gently onto the lower blanket and the upper one can be quickly thrown over him until his turn comes to be examined.

The badly wounded are brought here at present and immediately separated into classes. Those who can be moved are shipped to England, while the others are kept until they, too, are able to make the trip. Several of the cots have inmates. One is a wounded German who is surprised at the good treatment he has received.

"I didn't expect it," he says, picking at the sheet with trembling fingers.

One patient says, "A mounted man, Miss," in answer to your question, "It's a bad hemorrhage. It's the second time I've been invalided. Oh, yes, I want to get back!"

Once as you approach a cot the invalid draws the sheet over his face—it is a suggestive gesture—leaving visible only a mass of tangled hair and deep sunken eyes afire with pain.

We pass through lanes of pale stricken faces, gaunt, sallow cheeks, eyes that wander listlessly from floor to ceiling and back again. On one side of the big ward the long French windows open on a sort of Italian loggia, and this in turn gives on the bay, for the moment an expanse of silvery turquoise, over which the seagulls fly and which is peopled with tiny fishing craft and pleasure boats. Far away on the horizon ominous looking cruisers pass and repass shuttlelike.

The weather is mild, like our June days. Havre is still cherishing its well filled gardens and the sea is rippled only by soft, life giving breezes.

A black fishing boat manned by a trio in black corduroys slips slowly past the hospital, then a green one with scarlet stripe, a smack with cinnamon colored sails and a propelling oar held by a grim sea wolf. It is a ceaseless procession. Later, wrapped in their blankets, the wounded will be brought out here, where the salt air, the picture of life, the invitation to activity will all help in the work of reconstruction.

There is many a story told of the courage and pluck of the wounded.

Tommy Atkins, who had lain in the trenches a fortnight, was brought in sorely the worse for his experience which was aggravated by contact with a bit of flying shell. He pointed a derisive finger at the comfortable cot and smiled weakly.

"Me s'eep on that! No, it can't be, nurse; it can't just be." Then Tommy fainted.

And another, an officer this time and a man about town in London, ran his spoon about the edge of his broth bowl to get the last drop of the meagre portion.

"I've had many a good dinner at the Carlton, nurse, but 'pon me word that's the best meal I ever had—'pon me word."

Moored alongside the Maritime Hospital, in an arm of the Channel protected on one side by the breakwater and on the other by a curve of the shore, lies the Oxfordshire, one of the three ships devoted to the use of the British Red Cross. It is an enormous boat, ordinarily a liner in the East Indian service, but after a fortnight's activity in altering its use, nothing of its usual appearance remains but the lascars, who are busy holystoning a deck cleanly enough for the traditional meal to be taken from its surface."

The Oxfordshire is painted white with a broad green stripe about its hull and amidships, on either side the red cross. It flies several Red Cross flags. In its fortnight's service it has already conveyed thousands of wounded soldiers from Havre to Southampton, from which place they are moved, if possible, to such hospitals as are nearest to their homes. One wounded soldier picked up on the battlefield of the Aisne was in forty-eight hours in London.

There are twenty nurses detailed to the work of the hospital boat, and without undue crowding it can take care of 700 invalids.

A lift takes the wounded below and elevates them to the deck. Below all partitions between cabins have been removed, forming big wards, only such cabins being retained as are necessary for the officers, for the medical corps and for the incarceration of the temporarily insane, for many soldiers are maddened by the horror of the trenches under fire, added to the torture of wounds and exposure. Every sort of medical appliance is where it can be easily put to use, and here, as in all the British hospitals, system, cleanliness and readiness prevail.

The ship is cleared for the moment, but it will be filled by night and will start at midnight for the other side of the Channel.

It is wonderful work, unostentatiously and splendidly done. The words of praise are meagre enough and you are not surprised to hear the only commendatory phrase that the Colonel makes is that there has been only one death on board.

Havre is known to the tourist only as a point for embarkation, a stopping place to take trains to Paris maybe. In reality it is a locality of beautiful suburbs, each more wonderful than the last, and in one of these, at Saint-Vic, there is a convalescent camp where under canvas the mildly wounded are taken care of. There are about 600 in tents, and most of them, one might put the proportion at 99 per cent., are feverishly anxious to get well enough for the front again.

Many of the cases are malarial fevers. There are convalescents whose wounds are healed but whose strength has not yet returned. Saint-Vic is on a high plain overlooking the sea, and surrounded by land, unoccupied except by cattle. Many of the tents are double, with the inner lining of yellow; that has been found efficacious in regard to light. Hospital tents, laboratory outfits, garages for motors and motorcycles form the outer fringe. Men caring for their horses, cooking their breakfasts, doing chores, are all about. A Highland laddie waves a bunch of green and announces in broad Scotch that it's for his soup. Of course you hear coming from several openings the sounds of "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary," and get whiffs of 90 horsepower tobacco.

One of the younger men—he is 22 and is convalescing from trench disease—says that he has one fear—he admits that. "It is the cold. I don't mind the shrapnel or the shot a bloomin' bit, but, oh, that cold! You get so you have to dig, dig, dig, dig. It's the only way you can keep warm, and several of us have dug trenches all night rather than face the awful cold."

No expense or care is considered in treating the wounded. The day of our visit a delicate operation was taking place. It was on the ear of an invalided Grenadier, and the instrument for it had to be sent over from London and cost a hundred pounds to the Government.

On the wonderful Boulevard Maritime, which winds along the shore to the heights of Cap de Heve, is situated the former home of the Queen of Spain, Maria Christina, which was turned into a casino and is now flying the Red Cross flag. There are many seriously wounded in the cots placed in the salons, dancing and card rooms. Tents are on the strip of lawn before the portico and the convalescents form, as an Englishman put it, "a thin blue line of sick uns." Both here and at the yacht club the men are well enough to read and write letters—when hands and arms are unwounded—to play cards and checkers.

You pass by these two buildings to reach Saint Adresse, where at present is lodged the Belgian Ministry, to which has been allotted with true French courtesy the most charming of the many charming communes of which Havre boasts. If one is a pedestrian the climb to the summit by the circuitous road is only a bit less interesting than by way of some one of the famous stairways which lead from terrace to terrace.

On the top of the tallest hill from which hundreds of steps lead to the sea level, on the Place Frederick Sauvage, in the big department store of M. Dufayel, whose advertisements scattered all over the north of France are second only to the famous galleries of Paris, are many of the offices of the Belgian Ministers. Over each door flies the Belgian flag. All goods have been sent away and the interiors fitted with desks, chairs and office fixings. The streets leading here are filled with rushing autos bearing staff officers, despatch bearers and visitors.

PROOFREADERS PUT TO TEST.

"WHILE I admire more than any other person connected with literary endeavor the perfect proofreader," said a writing man with headquarters on the banks of the Bronx, "the imperfect variety which is largely in the majority is the ultimate boundary of my anathema, and particularly that brand which always knows more than the writer who prepared the copy.

"Just to test this peculiarity so prevalent among so-called intelligent proofreaders I prepared a bit of copy and sent it to twenty-five newspaper offices scattered from Maine to California, and all of them high class. The copy was about a certain wealthy man and the catch sentence read: 'Having completed a beautiful houseboat at a cost of $50,000 he went abroad to live.'

"Now how many proofreaders do you suppose let it go into print that way? Not one. Count them—not one.

"Every man of them knew better than I did that that rich man having finished a fine houseboat had gone aboard to live, because what else would a houseboat be built for? So they to a man changed the copy to suit their own ideas and correct a very evident mistake of mine.

"Yet they were all wrong and I was right, for the rich man had done exactly what I had written he had done, to wit: having built the houseboat he went abroad to live and turned the boat over to his brother's family to enjoy while he was away. So much for the intelligent proofreader who never can learn to follow copy."

From the Sketch.

The Great General Staff—We assure your Majesty——

Kaiser Canute—Oh, well, if you really think it any use my sitting here, I'll remain, but I'm getting very cold feet.

FREE PORTS TO BUILD UP AMERICAN SHIPPING

Frederic C. Howe's Plan Would Increase Our Commerce and Shift Financial Centre of World From London

Frederic C. Howe, Commissioner of Immigration at the Port of New York, prepared the following memorandum for submission to the President. The suggestion made in it has been indorsed by the Merchants Association of New York.

By FREDERIC C. HOWE, Commissioner of Immigration at the Port of New York.

IN the discussion and legislation now going forward for the reestablishment of the American merchant marine and the development of our carrying trade a very important, possibly the most important of all elements has been neglected. And that is the necessity for cargoes, not only for incoming ships but for outgoing ones as well.

In order to recreate our merchant marine and enter the field in competition with England and Germany for the carrying trade of the world, it is necessary that ships should be able speedily and surely to find cargoes. And neither the modification of the registration acts nor the acquisition of ships by the Government will achieve the desired result unless provision is made for this primary condition as well. This is a sine qua non to the development of American trade and shipping.

Several things cooperate at the present time for re-creation of our carrying trade. They are the European war, the opening of the Panama Canal, the amendments to the registry act and the new currency measure. Added to these is the substantial extension of the free list in the recently enacted tariff bill.

The European war has closed the ports of Germany and Russia. It has imperilled the carrying trade of England, Belgium and the Mediterranean countries. The Panama Canal brings South America close to North America and also opens up the trade of the Orient to us. We now have the financial machinery for the transaction of a world business through the establishment of subsidiary banking branches, while our attitude of friendly neutrality to all of the nations involved in the present war lends a strong moral influence to the development of American trade.

It is the countries that have substantially free trade that do the carrying trade of the world. They are England, Germany (through her free ports), Belgium, Holland and Denmark. The great bulk of the carrying trade is done by Great Britain, because she is a free trade country, and a reference to the rise of British shipping in the years which followed the repeal of the corn laws shows a tremendous and immediate increase in her overseas trade following the establishment of free trade.

For fifty years she has been mistress of the seas for the very simple reason that ships could come to her ports from all over the world; they could there discharge their cargoes and find other cargoes awaiting them without delay. For every country shipped to her ports for clearance, for here there were no obstructions, obstacles or tariff barriers to interfere with traffic.

All history is unanimous in its demonstration that carrying trade will go hundreds of miles to escape tariff barriers. Protective tariffs killed the Spanish trade; they destroyed the rich and prosperous cities of the Netherlands. They killed our own foreign shipping. For commerce hates tariff barriers.

In recent years Germany has competed with Great Britain for the carrying trade of the world. And she has been able to do this through her free ports, which exist in Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck ever since the Franco-Prussian war. These concessions were insisted on by these old free cities when they entered the empire. And by imperial law there exists in the harbor of these cities a large free harbor, where ships can come and go without the payment of customs duties upon their cargoes.

By this means a free counter is provided, across which goods can be exchanged and transshipped to other destinations. Or they can be placed in great storage warehouses where they can remain for an indefinite period until cargoes have accumulated for other ports. If desired they can be shipped at any time into the empire on the payment of the customs duties.

These ports have grown with great rapidity. They create limited areas of free trade. Here cargoes can be broken and new ones made up. To these ports ships can come from any place in the globe with the assurance that they will quickly find outgoing cargoes to some other destination. It is the free port that has enabled Germany to build up her shipping. It is this that has enabled her to compete with Great Britain.

In addition to England and Germany, Belgium, Holland and to some extent Denmark have a large carrying trade. And these countries too have substantially free trade.

America cannot hope to establish herself as the clearing house of the world until cargoes exist with which to fill ships' bottoms. For ships must not only be filled both going and coming; they must be able to change their destination and do a tramp trade. As it is now, we have cargoes of raw materials to European countries and some outgoing and incoming cargoes to South America and the Orient. But our protective tariff prevents the importation of European wares and compels a large part of the transatlantic shipping to go empty one way.

How can this obstacle be overcome? Aside from a policy of free trade the only other alternative is the development of the free port idea along the lines of German experience. And the suggestion is that Congress should provide for half a dozen free ports as an experiment; three of which should be on the Atlantic seaboard, one on the Gulf, one at Panama and one or two upon the Pacific coast.

These ports might be opened in cooperation with various cities. Or it might be provided that any city with a certain amount of customs receipts that offered dockage for a free port would be entitled to enjoy this privilege. This would be an encouragement to cities to acquire and develop their own docks and harbors, which for the most part are in control of private interests.

Into these ports ships could come from all over the world, from Europe, Africa, Asia and South America. Here their cargoes could be placed in warehouses without the payment of customs dues, or cargoes could be broken and remade. Goods which remained in the warehouses would be placed in bond, as is now done for importers. The warehouses would be like cold storage plants for non-perishable goods.

In addition to the obvious advantages from the recreation of our shipping, the diversion of trade to American ports would cheapen the cost of living. It would aid other businesses, for periodic surpluses of goods would accumulate, which would find their way into the country, and would also place near at hand many materials needed in industry.

The free port would offer great opportunity for financial operations, now made possible by the recent currency act. It would stimulate international banking and would tend to shift the financial centre of the world to this country. And America, by the logic of events, has become the natural centre for the world's financing, just as London became that centre several centuries ago, when it shifted from the cities of the Netherlands.

But the financial centre will only move to this country when it becomes a clearing house of goods as well as of money. For credit the world over is created by currently created wealth in transit or change, so that even our financial expansion is dependent upon the opening up of American ports to the clearance of the wealth of the world.

Now is the opportune moment for the development of this policy, while the ports of many nations are closed to trade. In addition, South America, the Pacific Islands and the Orient have become more accessible to our ports through the Panama Canal than they are to the older ports in Europe.

There is every reason why many of these countries should prefer to trade with us. But they can only do so when ships are in a position to earn the same return from our ports that they now earn from the ports of England, Germany and the other countries of Europe.

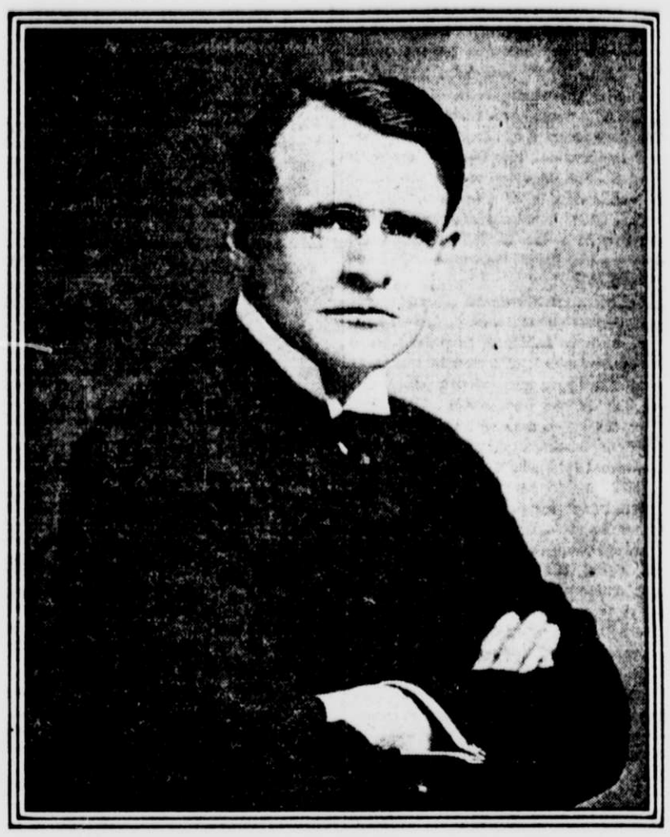


Photo by Campbell Studios.

F. C. Howe, managing director Peoples Institute in New York city

The Free Port of Hamburg

When Hamburg entered the German Empire in 1871 the city retained the right to remain a free port, which it had been in substance for centuries. The greater part of the port was set aside as a free port outside the customs lines, as the whole city had been before. The empire contributed 40,000,000 marks toward the construction of the free port, while the city contributed about 150,000,000 marks.

The free port consists of a large number of basins, many of them cut into the land, with quays jutting out into the river. Upon these quays are railroad tracks with cranes for the easy transfer of freight into the nearby sheds. In the larger outside basins are many mooring posts which provide anchorage for vessels transshipping cargoes in the stream.

As a part of the free port are many warehouses operated by the port authorities. Goods are stored in these warehouses for reexport or for ultimate consignment into Germany or the other countries of Europe.

The free port is considered by the customs department as foreign territory. It is surrounded by a customs line guarded by customs officials. At the land and water entrances of the free port are customs booths at which duty is paid on goods when they enter the empire.

All of the Hamburg pilots are ex officio customs inspectors. Under their guidance ships pass to their berths in the free port unmolested by customs officers. There are no declarations of dutiable goods to be made; no customs officials are taken aboard, with the delays attendant upon their presence.

When a ship is cargoed ready for sea a customs inspector pilot takes her from the free port to the mouth of the river. At no time is any other representative of the customs service aboard the boat. There is less hindrance to the free movement of the ship than in the free ports of England.

The free port contains such industries as are incident to the care and feeding of the employees, shipyards for repairs and other industries relating to the building, outfitting and provisioning of ships. In addition there are certain rice mills and oil mills. About 15,000 workmen are employed in the free port, but at least 12,000 are employed in the shipyards.

The cargoes of very many vessels are handled in midstream at the mooring posts, nearly one-half the tonnage of the harbor being discharged in this way. By this means the capacity of the port is doubled.

The warehousing business of the free port is in the hands of State [illegible] is partially privately operated warehousing company which rents warehouses in the free port [illegible] lands. The company issues [illegible] transferrable to order on goods [illegible] the property. A portion of the profits has been set aside to create a fund for the acquisition of the company's stock by the State, which will eventually become the full owner of the property by this process. [illegible] square feet of ground is covered by warehouses, which contain [illegible] square feet of storage space.

The port is not operated to yield a return on the investment, but [illegible] the prosperity of the city. [illegible] nage dues are collected on the [illegible] and for the use of mooring [illegible] all these dues are very low. [illegible] ship that can come up the [illegible] and discharge at mooring posts will have to pay only $11 for discharging [illegible] stream.

Hamburg is the second seaport in the world, its total foreign commerce being only $6,000,000 under that of New York in 1913. The total foreign commerce of the port is $1,960,000,000. It exceeds that of London by $100,000,000 and far exceeds Liverpool in imports. England is a free trade country.